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ABSTRACT

This document, the sixth in a series on diversity in the classroom, encourages schools to reflect on and explore current research and practical applications regarding gender issues, both inside and outside the classroom. Section 1, "Introduction," discusses what gender equity is and is not. Section 2, "Gender Equity is Important," explains that everyone benefits from a gender equitable classroom and examines various inequitable practices and their effects. Section 3, "Interactions," examines teacher/student interactions; the generic he and she and implications for the classroom; teacher contact time, level of achievement, and gender; and student/student interactions. Section 4, "The Classroom," discusses the effects of instruction by male and female teachers, eliminating gender bias in teaching strategies, and the effects of the physical classroom environment. Section 5, "School Ethos," examines the importance of the school environment to gender equity, offering a school ethos checklist. It also discusses the transition from elementary to high school, self-esteem and adolescents, career choices, dealing with sexual harassment, and devising a sexual harassment policy. Section 6, "Supporting Gender Equity Beyond the School," discusses parent participation, toys, television/movies, books, and community. Section 7, "Gender Discrimination," presents examples of widespread discrimination within a school district and explains how to eliminate it, noting legal considerations and gender equity. The appendix presents an observation guide and worksheet. (SM)

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Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit

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Diversity in the Classroom Series

Number Six

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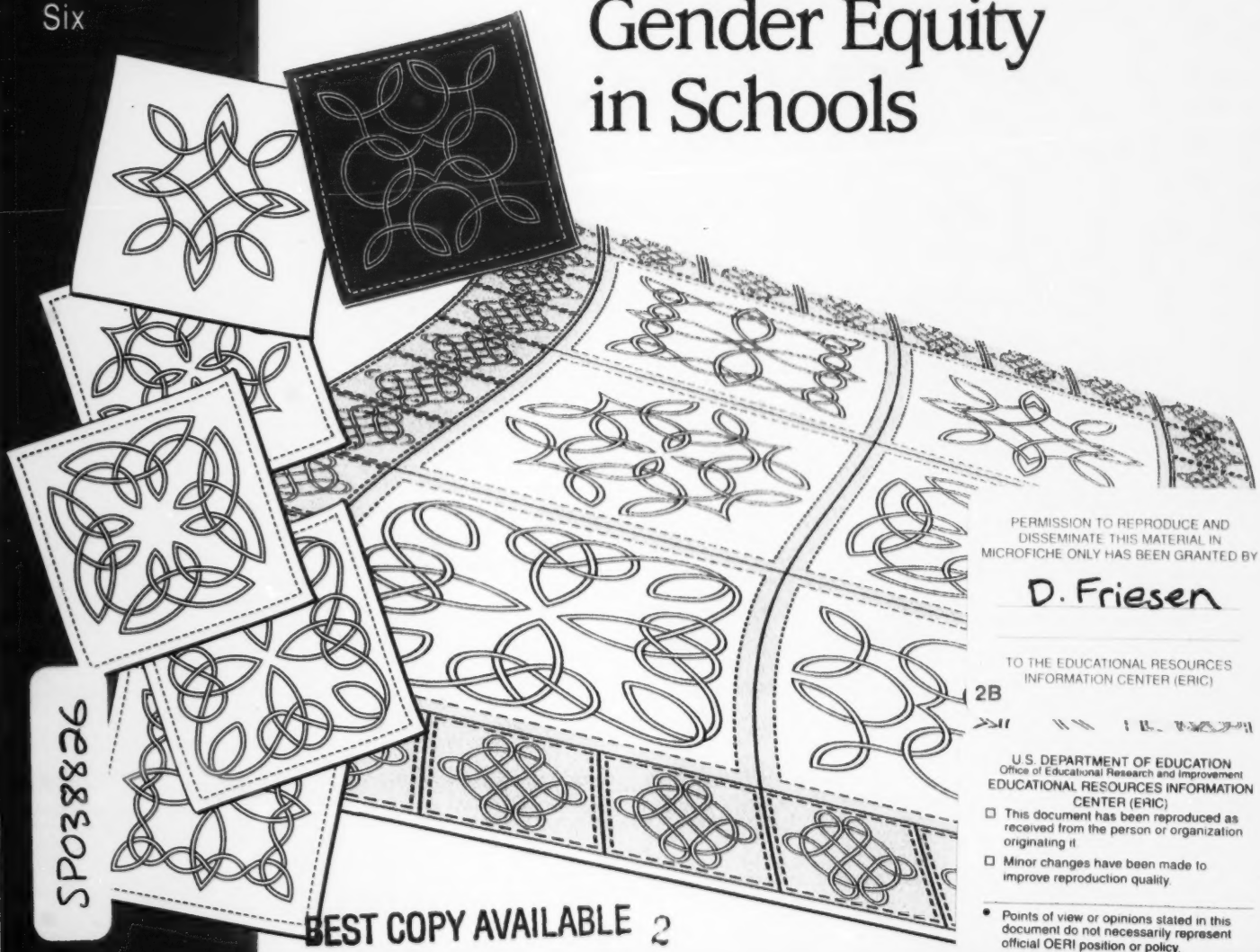
Realizing Gender Equity in Schools



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Foreword

Foreword

"Diversity in the Classroom" is a series of resources prepared for educators by educators. Working with an advisory committee of educators, authors research each topic thoroughly, distilling theory into a practical resource. The documents are research-based, concise yet comprehensive, and we hope of immediate use to teachers.

Guided by the following principles, each of the seven documents in the series:

- supports a learner-centred climate conducive to transactional and transformational learning
- encourages inclusion and celebrates diversity
- promotes teacher development that accommodates children's needs
- challenges teachers to examine assumptions and beliefs
- respects and empowers all members of the learning community.

Just as the blocks of a quilt are assembled to form a larger and more complete picture, so, too, will you find that the seven documents together form a more complete picture of "Diversity in the Classroom". We invite you to explore each of the documents in the series.

Caroline Krentz
Director, SIDRU

"Honouring Diversity in the Classroom: Challenges and Reflections" is the foundational document which provides the framework for the other documents. Each of the other six documents presents a different block of the "Diversity in the Classroom" quilt.

Gwen Dueck
Director, SPDU

We hope you enjoy working with this resource and will consider the other documents in the series. Your comments and suggestions are always appreciated.

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This document comes to its present form with the thoughts and ideas of many . . .

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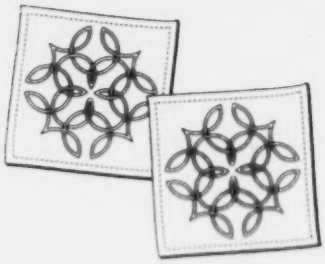
Contents



Introduction 3

Gender Equity IS Important 6

Interactions
- Teacher-Student 10
- Student-Student 18

The Classroom
- Instruction 23
- Eliminating Gender Bias 26
- The Physical Environment 32

School Ethos 33
- Easing Transition 37
- Self-Esteem and Adolescents 38
- Sexual Harassment 41

Beyond the School 44

Gender Discrimination 46

Conclusion 49

Resource Materials 50

Bibliography 52

Appendix A 54

Introduction

Introduction

Imagine waking up one morning as a member of the opposite sex.

Would you have the same career?
Would your lifestyle be better or worse?
Would you have more or less freedom?
Does gender make a difference?

What if you asked the students in your classroom the same questions? What kind of answers might you hear?

A Voice for All Students encourages a process of reflection and exploration of current research and practical applications from classroom to school divisions. Gender issues both inside and outside the classroom - on the playground, in extracurricular activities, the school ethos and school division practices - are examined. Proactive strategies for beyond the school are suggested.

We can make a difference towards eliminating gender inequity in a variety of ways.

We are living in a society which is still very much gender inequitable; students also live and learn within this larger society. They come to us with a variety of experiences, cultures and traditions. Though schooling may have been part of the problem, it now can be a catalyst for solutions. We can't expect to solve all the problems associated with gender inequity, but we can work within our classrooms and schools to eliminate discrimination that affects our students. As we try to implement gender equity we may encounter barriers. This document provides options to help deal with these.

Reflection

The Influence of the Media

Take a look at what is playing at your local theater this weekend.

- How many films will have positive role models of women? of men?

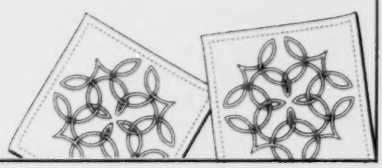
Pick up your local newspaper.

- How many stories are about things women are doing? men are doing?

- Tally up how many times women are pictured in the paper compared to men. Are you surprised?

What conclusions might you draw from these comparisons?

Note: This activity works well with students as an introduction to gender equity in the media.



Gender Equity Is

- helping all students develop to their full potential whether they are girls or boys.

Gender Equity Is NOT

- giving more attention to one gender at the expense of the other
- preferential treatment
- favouring girls or boys

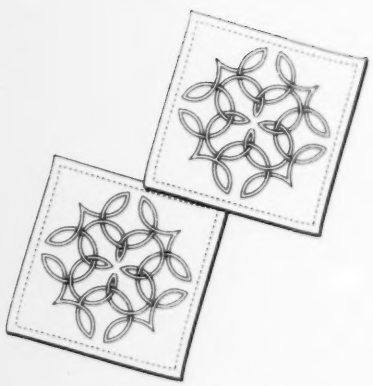
Gender equity is more than having an Awareness Day and saying we "did" gender equity for the year. It applies to all classrooms, whether they are regular or special needs programs. Gender equity is about attitudes which materialize in actions so that they *naturally* permeate the practices and ethos of our schools. It is evident at every level of a school division:

- in classrooms and staff rooms
- on the playground
- in the management and administrations of our schools
- in central offices
- at the board level
- in policy

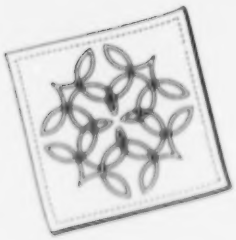
Gender equity cannot be an add on if it is meant to make a difference.

Promoting gender equity in education means:

- understanding the gendered nature of schooling
- examining our own practices
- making changes— individually and system-wide



GENDER EQUITY
Is Important



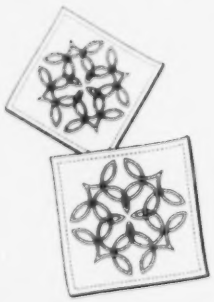
All students deserve to have the best education possible to meet the many challenges the future holds for them. Ideally, teachers help all students reach their learning potentials to help them maximize their opportunities in our fast changing world. We have a responsibility to provide students with the best possible education. Professionally and ethically, we are obliged to be gender equitable in our classrooms and schools. Legally, both provincially and federally, schools fall under the provincial Human Rights Legislation and the Constitution, both of which guarantee the right to NOT experience discrimination because of gender.

Everyone benefits with gender equity. A gender equitable classroom provides the freedom for all students to learn and achieve. A teacher who creates and fosters this type of environment encourages all students' learning.

I expect all my students to do well.
I don't treat them differently.

Is my teaching gender biased?

The first step is to become aware of the issue. Research shows that once teachers are aware of gender-biased practices, they change practices to improve their teaching effectiveness.



Gender inequities are harmful for both genders in different ways. Can you spot examples in the following story?

Several students were not in the play for the spring concert. On the morning of the dress rehearsal the following was heard from the teacher in the Grade 8 classroom: "We need a couple of volunteers for the morning rehearsal to set up the sound system. How about the boys there? And two more to watch the Grade 2 room so Mrs. Orr can play piano. Cindy, Alyssa, you're good with little kids; you must babysit in the evenings. How about helping?"

I worry about my son. Will he lose his gentleness because he has to fit in with other people's expectations? Society says boys are supposed to be rough and tough; our little guy isn't and we think he's in the minority. How do teachers handle these brawn vs. brain attitudes?
(Mother)

Situations such as these highlight the impact that gender-based stereotypical expectations can have on people. Where do they come from? Some examples are:

- television
- magazines
- movies
- cultural traditions
- conversations
- schools
- families
- role models

When verbal or nonverbal, direct or indirect messages are made about gender, they set unrealistic expectations that may curb potential ("you can/can't do this because you are a boy/girl"). In the long run these messages affect an individual's quality of life.

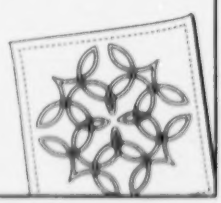
When left unchallenged and unchanged, these unrealistic messages may begin to be internalized as cultural norms. Research suggests internalization begins at a very early age.

Schools too, like any institution, reflect society in their practices and expectations. Be aware of, challenge, and change inequitable practices wherever they occur. By doing so we may help eliminate unnecessary boundaries that hinder full development of all our students. Much research tells us that girls have been shortchanged by the education system. We can't change the past, but we can learn from it.

Reflection

Negative stereotypes of gender may compound stereotypes based on race and culture.

- Have you observed examples of these multiple inequities?



Inequitable Practices

Research over the past 20 years tells us that:

- boys consistently experience more educational opportunities than girls
- boys demand and get more attention than girls
- the school environment encourages boys to succeed while girls tend to fade into the background
- adults use a harsher tone of voice when reprimanding boys than girls
- over a school career, girls may receive up to 60 hours less teaching time than boys

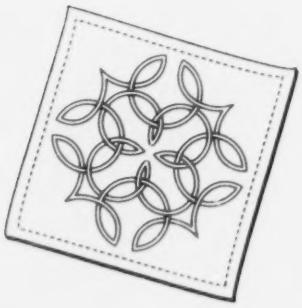
No one wants to treat either gender better than the other, but unintentionally many factors work together and, over time, accumulate to make the learning experience less productive for girls. The effects of inequitable treatment are real.

Gender equity in education is more than putting girls on equal footing with boys - it's eliminating the barriers and stereotypes that limit the opportunities and choices of both sexes.

(Bailey, 1996)

- Women occupy most of the low paying service industry jobs and continue to earn $0.70 for every $1.00 men earn.
- By high school, girls are less committed to careers and tend to focus on marriage and stereotypical female jobs - 45% of teen women have marriage as a main objective for the future (*Statistics Canada*, 1988).

Trends over the past few years show that in our universities girls' enrollment in the "non-traditional" and higher paying career bound colleges, like engineering and medicine, are slowly increasing, and we should see this as a positive sign. This is not to suggest that the purpose of our K-12 education system is to steer more people towards post-secondary education as a sign of success. All students should have knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them succeed in whatever career they choose. We want to avoid putting up invisible gender barriers that thwart ambition or lower self-esteem.



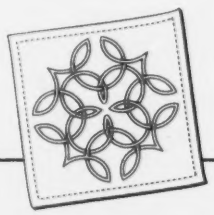
Equity and Equality

Let's imagine a family with two children who are practicing for a math quiz the next day. One child, Leslie, has a difficult time with math skills, while Terry, the other child, has no problem with the subject. After supper it is time to prepare for tomorrow's quiz. The parents supervise the study, but since Leslie has difficulty and Terry does not, the parents spend much more time with Leslie than Terry.

When the two children take the quiz, both do very well. Had the parents spent equal time with each, Leslie would have done poorly while Terry still would have done very well.

Equity is

Equality is



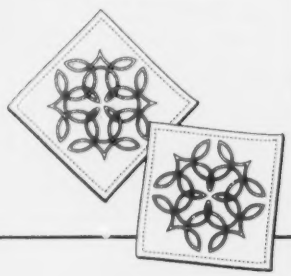
Equity must become a proactive goal of schooling rather than a reactive response to wrongs committed.

(Pollard, 1996)

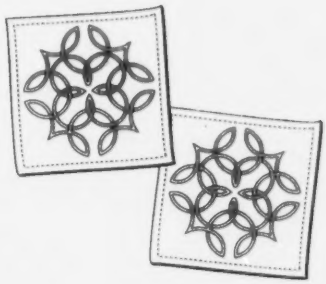
Reflection

The research to date examines the inequity that female students experience throughout their education. Little research, if any, deals with the impact of equity for boys in school.

Why might this be so?



INTERACTIONS



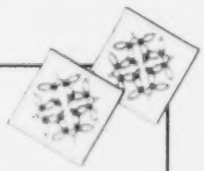
Teacher/Student

We know we are the sum of our experiences. So too, are our students.

There are differences between boys and girls that influence the way they act and subsequently are treated. The response to an infant based on the color of the clothing the baby is wearing or the different tones of voice used when speaking to little boys and little girls are everyday examples. These interaction differences also occur in the educational setting.

Studies indicate some general characteristics which may be useful.

Given the general characteristics of students in a school setting, research shows that teachers tend to treat each gender differently. Here is a summary of some of the studies.



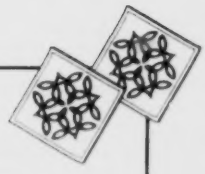
TEACHER INTERACTION WITH BOYS

Boys are more likely to:

- be praised by teachers
- be punished
- join in and initiate discussions and offer comments
- be asked their opinions
- be asked more higher order questions with more time to respond to teachers' questions
- be told they have ability
- receive more teacher talk and more information on what is or is not acceptable behaviour, plus informative feedback
- receive a higher percentage of contacts and instructional time in math

TEACHERS TEND TO

- check on boys' work more often
- give more instructional time in math to boys
- show boys how to do the activity and then let the boys work during manipulative activities
- work harder to obtain correct responses from boys than girls
- have more disapproval contacts and criticism with boys
- use an angry or harsh tone, as opposed to a conversational tone, when criticizing them
- use more jokes and camaraderie with boys
- refuse male students permission to do housekeeping errands or to tattle
- deny boys permission to meet personal needs and desires



TEACHER INTERACTION WITH GIRLS

Girls are more likely to:

- be quiet, better behaved and passive
- be ignored, except when physically close to teachers
- not call out answers as much as boys
- receive less positive feedback
- hear comments related to neatness and their ability to follow directions and not on their intellectual ability or effort
- be acknowledged less for personal competence

TEACHERS TEND TO

- have trouble remembering girls' names
- ask girls lower order questions such as "what" and "how" questions, rather than "why" and "what's your opinion" types of inquiries
- manipulate equipment for girls during science and math activities
- refer to girls' lack of competence or their inability to understand when giving negative feedback
- give girls more academic contact and more instructional time only during reading

A landmark field study in the area of gender effects on classroom interaction was conducted by David and Myra Sadker, now noted as experts in the area. In their study, the Sadkers observed students and teachers in over 100 classrooms, from primary to post-secondary, from a variety of socioeconomic and geographic conditions. As a result of these extensive observations, they were able to make several generalizations that shed light on the quantity and quality of interactions, many of which were gender biased.

Quantity of Interactions

The Sadkers' study established that responses from the teacher, the frequency of which decreased as the school year progressed, occurred approximately twice per minute with nearly three quarters focussed on academic content. The frequencies of teacher/student interactions in a classroom were grouped into three categories:

Frequency of Interaction	% of Students Receiving Teacher's Interactions
No interaction	25%
Once per class	65%
More than 3 times per class	Less than 10%

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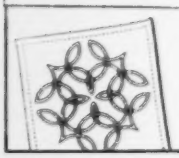
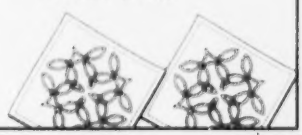
- In one half of all the classrooms, the prominent students received 20% of the teacher response.
- At least 25% of the students did not interact with the teacher at all.

Quality of Interaction

The Sadkers also studied the content of classroom communication and divided the responses into the following categories.

RESPONSE TYPE	EXAMPLE	GENDER INFORMATION	RESEARCH OBSERVATION
Praise	"Excellent", "Good Work"	• Boys received more than girls	• Used 11% of time • Yet in 1/4 of of classrooms not used at all
Acceptance	"Okay", "Uh huh"	• Girls received the most	• Most frequent response at one per minute • Gives no academic feedback
Remediation	"Let's think again on that"	• Boys received more than girls.	• Used in 99% of classrooms
Criticism	"No, you're not right"	• Boys received more than girls	• Used 5% of the time





This tells us that some students received more and others less of the teacher's attention. A more in-depth analysis reveals that what was said between teacher and student was definitely divided along gender lines.

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Each time a girl opens a book and reads a womanless history, she learns she is worthless. Each time the teacher passes over girls to elicit the ideas and opinions of boys, those girls are conditioned to be silent and to defer. As teachers use their expertise to question, praise, probe, clarify and correct boys, they help these male students sharpen ideas, refine their thinking, gain their voice, and achieve more. When females are offered the leftovers of teacher time and attention, morsels of amorphous feedback, they achieve less.

Then girls and women learn to speak softly or not at all; to submerge honest feelings, withhold opinions, and to defer to boys; to avoid math and science as male domains; to value neatness and quiet more than assertiveness and creativity; to emphasize appearance and hide intelligence. Through this curriculum in sexism they are turned into educational spectators instead of players; but education is not a spectator sport.

(Sadker and Sadker, 1994, p. 13)

Reflection

Did you know that one researcher found that when girls speak, teachers often do not look at them? When teachers do, they tend to nod their heads many times which makes the female student stop speaking because she thinks the teacher isn't really listening. (LaFrance, 1985)

Ask yourself, "Do I do this?"

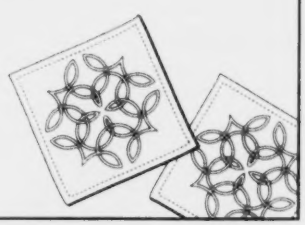
The Sadkers found that in 90% of the classrooms teachers reacted to student conduct most frequently with remediation and the least often with praise. How do you feel about this? This research suggests that it is more likely that boys have been getting more educationally valuable attention and girls have been receiving neutral or negative attention.

Appendix A provides some ideas for examining your own practices and interaction patterns.

"I'm fearful for my little girl. Because she's quiet, I know teachers will ignore her and comment on what a good student she is. They won't challenge her. They're just so happy she doesn't interrupt their class. That's what happened to me."

- Mother

How would you address this concern?



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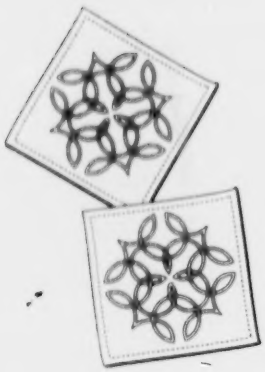


The Generic "He" and "She"

Research has been done to see what is understood by "he" and words that are "supposedly meant to include females" but are said in male terms.

> Look at that bug. **He** sure is going up that stem quickly.
>
> Chapter 6: The Industrial **Man**
>
> Hey you **guys!**
>
> It was a great step for **mankind.**

The generic "he" is used much more often than "she". Can you think of some examples of the generic "she"?

> **She** was a splendid ship.
>
> That's the '97 model Chev. **She's** got a great chassis.

To both primary and secondary students "he" does not mean "he *and* she". It means "he". The content of the messages sent are not always received the way they were originally intended, especially when it applies to gender differentiation (LaFrance, 1985).

What does that mean for me in the classroom?

- Use neutral or inclusive words such as "it", "students", "class", "people".
- Use a resource such as the *Bias Free Word Finder*, a dictionary that can provide bias free alternatives. For words like postman, use letter carrier.
- View the video: *A Word in Edgewise* available through the Stewart Resource Center at the STF office in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

A growing number of institutions, such as national and local newspapers, TV and radio stations, provincial and federal governments, corporations and organizations such as the American Psychological Association (which sets standards for academic writings) no longer accept gender-biased language. If one is referring to people of both genders, the use of "man" is no more acceptable in formal communication than the word "ain't". Using inclusive language is becoming more common in formal communication and is beginning to be noticed in informal communication as well.

As teachers, we have the responsibility to model and use appropriate language in our classrooms. This means modelling and using language that is gender inclusive.

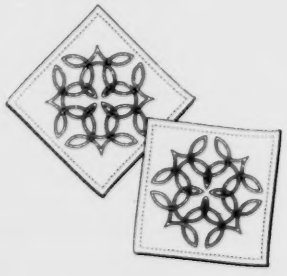
Teacher Contact Time, Levels of Achievement and Gender

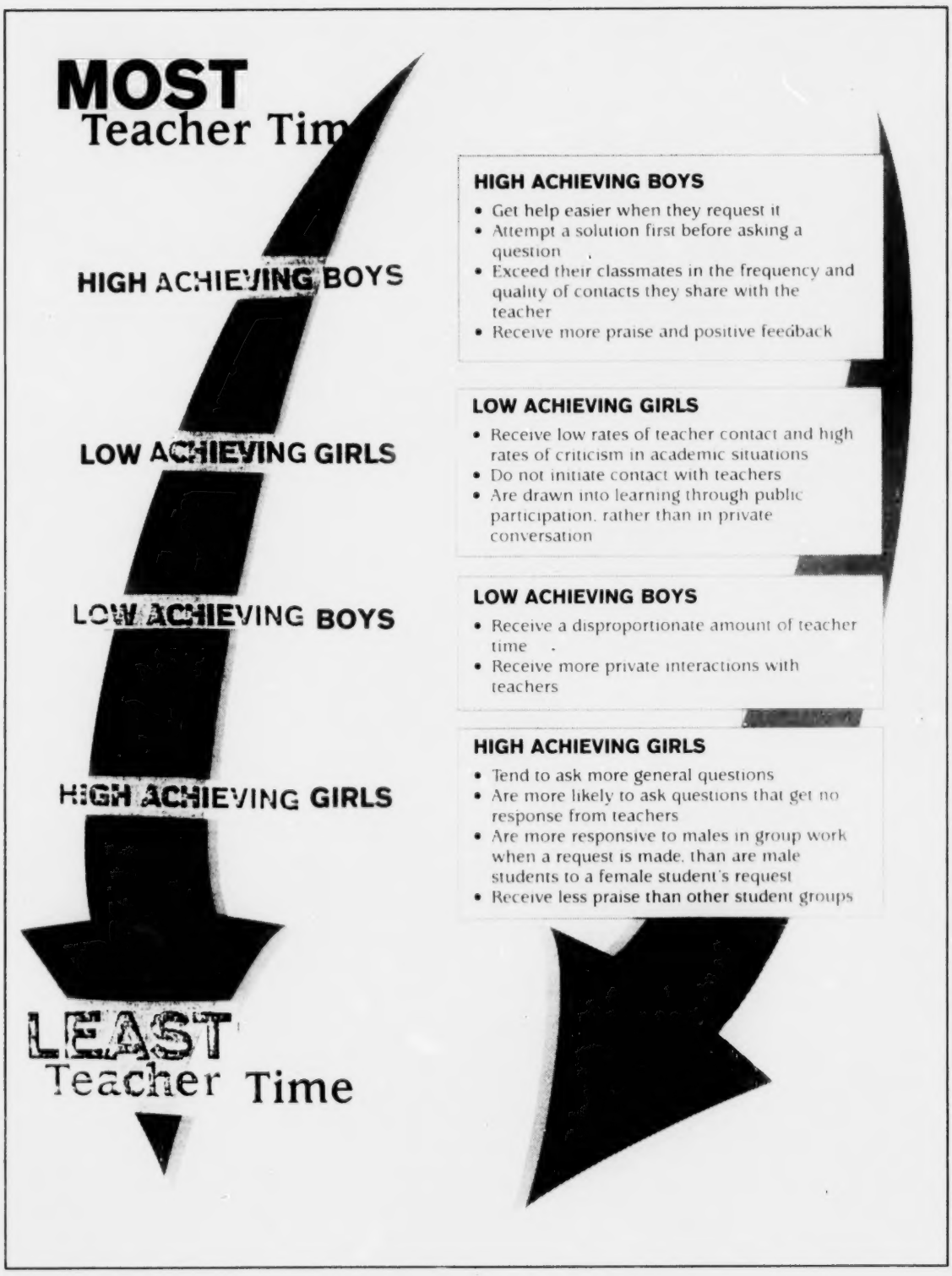
Teachers may interact differently with students of different achievement levels. Some studies describe different characteristics of student achievement levels as they relate to gender.

The following graphic illustrates the research on levels of achievement and gender and the allocation of teacher contact time.

What do you first notice?

Who do you think should receive the most teacher time? The least? How do you decide?




MOST
Teacher Tim
HIGH ACHIEVING BOYS
LOW ACHIEVING GIRLS
LOW ACHIEVING BOYS
HIGH ACHIEVING GIRLS
LEAST
Teacher Time
HIGH ACHIEVING BOYS
• Get help easier when they request it
• Attempt a solution first before asking a question
• Exceed their classmates in the frequency and quality of contacts they share with the teacher
• Receive more praise and positive feedback
LOW ACHIEVING GIRLS
• Receive low rates of teacher contact and high rates of criticism in academic situations
• Do not initiate contact with teachers
• Are drawn into learning through public participation, rather than in private conversation
LOW ACHIEVING BOYS
• Receive a disproportionate amount of teacher time
• Receive more private interactions with teachers
HIGH ACHIEVING GIRLS
• Tend to ask more general questions
• Are more likely to ask questions that get no response from teachers
• Are more responsive to males in group work when a request is made, than are male students to a female student's request
• Receive less praise than other student groups

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Teachers' Physical Position in the Classroom

Research suggests that teachers tend to spend most of their time in the area of the classroom where boys are located. Teachers know that their presence near students is non-threatening yet effective in classroom management. In addition, being near a student gives the opportunity to help with the little things and have private conversations. If you find yourself consistently in a certain area of the classroom you need to ask yourself "who is **not** getting my attention?" In most cases the answer is probably the girls.

Reflection

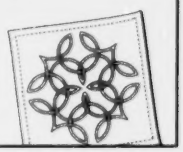
DILEMMA

Let's assume that a group of boys are very disruptive today. You spend a lot of your time near them and they settle down.

Is that what's needed to create a good learning environment for all the students, including the girls?

Yes or no?

Why?



TEACHING **TIPS**

What options do you have to encourage a more balanced use of your physical presence in the classroom? Try:

- ✓ Creating a mixed seating plan.
- ✓ Changing your plan (encourage student input) on a regular basis giving you an opportunity to interact with different students.
- ✓ Jotting down or making a mental note of where you are working with students.
- ✓ Asking students for their opinions on your position in the classroom and their learning.

Reflection

In the early grades, girls are ahead of or equal to boys on almost every standardized measure of achievement and psychological well-being. By the time they graduate from high school or college, they have fallen back. (Sadker and Sadker, 1994)

We need to ask ourselves, "Does this happen here?"

Reflection

A quick check on teacher interactions

Ask yourself, "Do I ..."

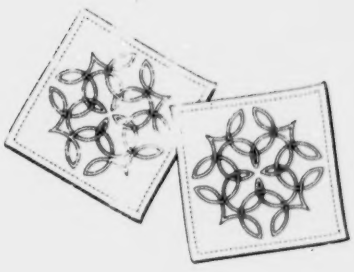
- expect boys to be more "active" than girls?
- expect girls to be "good students"?
- know if the boys demand and get most of my attention?
- compare the achievement levels and gender in my class?
- praise girls on their ability?
- say "uh huh", "okay" or do I give precise academic feedback to everyone most of the time?

Do I need or want to have data gathered, by myself or someone else, about my

For kindergarten and primary teachers there are two excellent resources available that highlight these issues for children. They are *The Girls are the Ones With the Pointy Nails* by K. Bailey and *Handbook for Achieving Sex Equity Through Education* by S. Greenberg.

Student/Student

Have you noticed that classrooms which have more peer interactions during learning also have more friendship groups and conversely, those classrooms with little or no peer interaction have closed friendship groups with children with no friends?



As children grow older they form friendship groups at school. Peer contacts account for a third of classroom experience for children. Research suggests friendships are based on intellectual ability. Often reading groupings determine friendship groups. It's important to vary groupings to encourage friendships that may not otherwise develop.

How can I help my students interact more equitably with each other?

TEACHING TIPS

- ✓ Explain to your students that you are learning about gender equity and want to share your learning with them.
- ✓ Use the "What if you awakened to find yourself the other gender?" activity.
- ✓ Brainstorm differences and similarities of the genders. Discuss.
- ✓ Engage the students as researchers; try a gender check tally sheet in class, or during group work.
- ✓ Discuss or have students write about being girls and boys and the effects their gender has on their participation, lack of, or feelings during group work.
- ✓ Talk about ideas you have found in your reading and ask students if it fits with their experiences
- ✓ Discuss the "big picture" - the long-term effects of gender inequities in school and society.
- ✓ Design and discuss ways of observing gender stereotypes in:
  - television
  - movies
  - print media
  - toys
  - games
  - societal expectations
  - school
  - parties
  - jobs

Seating Arrangements

A basic classroom management tool is the seating plan. Seating arrangements, according to the research, tend to be gender segregated whether they are student or teacher initiated. Whatever your seating plan, it's important to know your reasons for choosing your seating arrangement and the educational benefit for specific seating patterns.

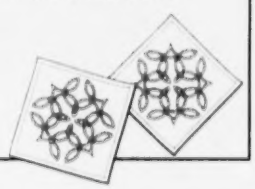
It might be very appropriate to have the girls sit together since girls feel much more comfortable asking a question or expressing doubt to other girls rather than in the company of boys and vice versa.

Successful teachers provide for a variety of experiences for their students. As you continue to work on creating a gender equitable environment, you will sense when your students are ready, "gender equitably speaking", to accept mixed gender groupings. Your preparations, discussions, and examples will prepare your students so they will see mixed groupings as a positive "working-with-and-learning-from-others" atmosphere. The goal is not to have mixed gender groupings all the time. Rather, when mixed gender groupings are used, they should be positive experiences for all students. In any kind of interaction we can notice two messages - what is said and what is not said. Sometimes what is NOT being said can send a louder message to the receiver of the message.

Reflection

If students had a choice, they would sit with the same gender. Research shows that teachers tend to arrange seating by gender groups.

Knowing this, what will that mean for you in the classroom?



Choosing Partners

We know that when we ask students to pick partners they'll usually choose a partner of the same gender, which isn't a problem unless they never mix with the other gender. In what ways might we encourage students to engage in mixed groupings or to select partners? A discussion highlighting the variety of talents people can offer regardless of gender might help to open more doors to learning opportunities and friendships.

When students are in mixed-gender groupings, observe them carefully and be ready to assist if you notice difficulties.

When teachers change partner groupings, students will often experience and benefit from the wider variety of interactions and situations.

TEACHING TIPS

If students are reluctant to work with someone of the other gender, you could:

- Talk to them about learning from others and respecting their differences.
- Encourage discussion about gender differences in communication, and the importance of listening, offering non-judgemental comments, and building trust.
- Stress the advantages of learning with and from others, regardless of gender.
- Mention your hesitation when you were a student to have to work with a girl/boy. (Students greatly appreciate and remember the honesty of teachers when they tell their personal stories.)

Grouping Students

There are many times when the learning situation invites group work. It's important to make grouping decisions that will promote positive academic and social outcomes.

Research indicates that in group work, boys tend to:

- talk to boys both when asking questions and making decisions for taking action
- respond more often to boys' requests than to girls' requests.
- minimize the contributions of the girls in the group work setting

In group work, girls tend to:

- be less likely to draw attention to themselves
- remain silent to avoid insults from the boys in mixed gender groupings
- be more inclusive in their interactions with group members
- be the recorders and listeners while boys often set up and manipulate materials and equipment

TEACHING TIPS

Here are some examples to "choose" or "assign" groupings that are not based on gender:

- ✓ Number off by 1's, 2's, 3's, etc.
- ✓ Pair up with someone wearing the same color
- ✓ Pick someone you've never worked with before
- ✓ Choose someone whose name starts or ends like yours

Students' skills vary and pitting one gender against the other is unnecessary and can be harmful to the group that does not do well. This can create a poisoned environment that is fertile ground for powerful messages to both groups. It's much better to mix groups or have same sex groups compete against each other.

Time to go to the gym. Let's line up at the door. Boys in one line, girls in the other.

Grade 3 Teacher

Hey Mom, guess what? Today in gym the boys team beat the girls in volleyball. We're better than the girls.

Grade 5 Boy

Teachers wouldn't line up students according to their skin color nor should we segregate according to their gender.

Reflection

"Okay, for this quick review let's divide into teams, girls on this side, boys on the other. One point for each correct answer." - Grade 11 Biology

How will the teacher deal with the "fall out" that will occur when the competition is over and one group wins and the other loses?

What are some alternative ways to maximize motivation and participation in this situation?

THE Classroom

Instruction

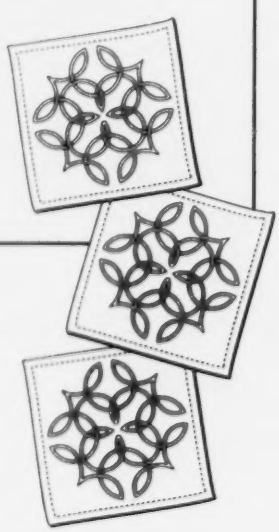
Gender of the Teacher

Though there are some studies which outline general differences in the ways male and female teachers set the tone in their classrooms, most of the conclusions regarding teacher gender and interactions with students are similar. Teachers, both men and women, elementary or secondary, interact more with boys than with girls. In addition, both male and female teachers view girls as being more independent, creative and academically oriented while boys are seen as more aggressive.

Reflection

Researchers found that between grade seven and eight the amount of conversations that girls *initiate* decreases while communication between boys and teachers increases. (Handley, 1985)

Is this true in the '90s?



TEACHING TIPS

Successful teachers of both genders:

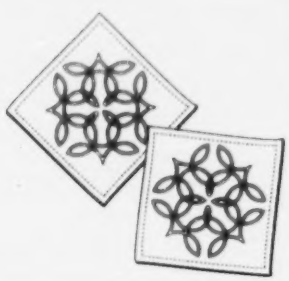
- ✓ use non-sexist inclusive language
- ✓ avoid sexist humour
- ✓ encourage all students to participate
- ✓ make students feel comfortable when asking questions and taking risks
- ✓ do not use negative criticism as a way of responding to incorrect answers
- ✓ value creativity
- ✓ avoid practices that reinforce stereotypes
- ✓ identify bias and confront discrimination
- ✓ provide role models for both sexes
- ✓ understand and adapt instructional strategies to account for gender
- ✓ have private contacts with both boys and girls
- ✓ stay with students to remediate an incorrect answer
- ✓ do not rely on rigidly structured classrooms with only teacher-directed learning activities
- ✓ are tolerant of occasional misbehaviour
- ✓ have relaxed, warm classrooms that promote student discussion
- ✓ praise and affirm both boys and girls

Reflection

What happens in my classroom?

What are some reasons for what happens?

What can I do differently?

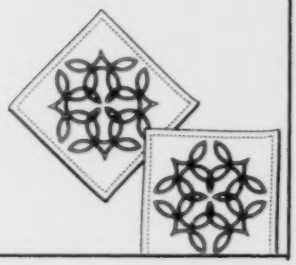


Reflection

Why is it that one questions why Johnny can't read, but does not question why Janie can't do math?

DILEMMA:

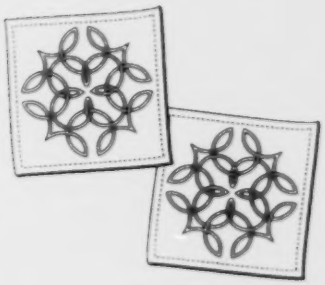
In your school who gets the bulk of additional learning assistance, boys or girls? For what subjects?



I've got a class of 21 boys and 6 girls; can you imagine what kind of year it's going to be? Those boys are so active; at least the group of girls will be a good group of workers.

— Grade 4 teacher

Is this a self-fulfilling prophecy?



Teacher Expectations

Researchers have found that teachers have more positive things to say about girls than boys in their everyday conversations. They have also found teachers tend to watch boys more carefully and tell them to do things that girls tended to do without having to be told.

Teachers often expect boys to be aggressive, independent and have better physical skills. Girls, on the other hand, are often expected by teachers to be more emotional, interactive, ambitious and empathetic.

TEACHING TIPS

Hints for Establishing a Gender Equitable Culture in Your Classroom

Your class needs to know that you will:

- ✓ set the same standards of behaviour and discipline for both boys and girls.
- ✓ avoid comparisons of boys and girls regarding behaviour, achievement, attitudes, successes and failures.
- ✓ avoid phrases like "Boys will be boys" and "Act like a lady" (which reinforce stereotypical expectations).
- ✓ accept and encourage emotional expression from both boys and girls.
- ✓ ask students if they are treating a person differently because of gender.
- ✓ ask students to tell you when you are treating either group differently.

(adapted from Greenberg, 1985)

Eliminating Gender Bias in Teaching Strategies

We've probably recognized some biases in our own schooling and perhaps in our present teaching experience. Perhaps after using the suggestions in Appendix A you have found areas you wish to work on. Consider the following true story...

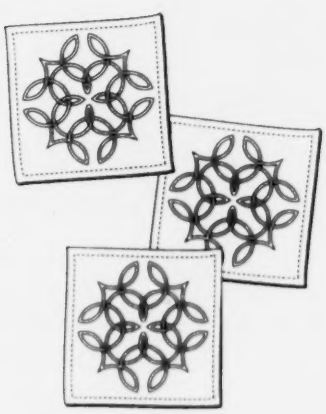
Ms. Hanson teaches Grade 7/8. She is aware of gender issues in instruction and knows that boys tend to demand and get most of the teacher's attention. Based on some reading and reflection, she decides to include the girls more often in her classroom discussions. Her goal is to give each group equitable amounts of questions and teacher time.

She began delivering her lessons thinking she was dividing her time equally among the girls and boys. After a while, some of the boys expressed their concerns saying things such as "You like the girls best, you're always talking to them," and "You hardly ever ask us any questions." Then, to the teacher's surprise, in the same discussion the girls chimed in, agreeing with the boys, "Yes, you're treating us better than the boys. We all should be treated the same; you should treat us fairly."

Concerned about the students' comments, Ms. Hanson began to think back over her actions. She was sure she was being as equal as possible, but perhaps not. She wanted to verify her practice.

It was during this time that she had a teacher associate and an intern. Along with Ms. Hanson the three designed a mini-action research project. They prepared a data collection sheet which would show who was receiving interaction from the teacher. The intern and associate gathered Ms. Hanson's interactions at regular intervals over the next three days. After the three days passed, they analyzed the data. The teacher was right. She was equally dividing her interactions between the girls and the boys.

Even after sharing this information with her students, they still insisted she was giving far more attention to the girls. "Well," she said, "Why don't we set up our own class research project? You collect the data on me and then we'll analyze it together." Four students, two boys and two girls, followed the same data collecting procedure as did the teacher associate and intern.



The time came to analyze the data with the class. The students saw that their own data collection yielded the same conclusions as Ms. Hanson's; the girls were not getting more attention than the boys. In fact, both groups were receiving the same amount of teacher interaction.

According to Ms. Hanson, "It wasn't until they saw it with their own eyes that they believed that I was not favouring

either group. Of course we had quite a discussion about why the boys felt that way. It was a great opportunity to discuss gender equity not only at school, but also in relation to other things happening in their lives."

Reflection

This scenario illustrates other issues involved in gender equity.

The Culture of Inequity

Why did the boys perceive the girls were receiving more of the teacher's time when in fact both groups were receiving the same amount?

Is the history of inequity in the classroom seen as the norm for these students?

Female Deference to Males

Why did the girls so quickly defend the boys' position to the teacher?

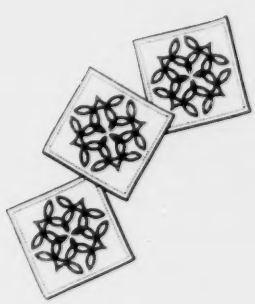
Did the girls really think they were getting more attention from the teacher or did they want to give the boys another reason to accept them by deferring to boys?

Seeing and Experiencing is Believing

When the boys experienced less teacher attention than they had grown accustomed to, they experienced tension. How do you feel about the process Ms. Hanson used to deal with their concerns?

The girls now have had the opportunity to receive more attention from the teacher. They realized that there was some change in the status quo. What are some implications for these girls?

Effective teachers use a variety of instructional approaches. Here is a checklist to help assess gender bias in learning environments.



TEACHING TIPS

A quick check on instructional practices

While you are planning your lessons using one of the following strategies, ask yourself:

- ✓ Who will manipulate the materials?
- ✓ How are the groups divided?
- ✓ How will the students choose their own groups?
- ✓ Who will be the "recorders" if they are needed?
- ✓ How will I preface group discussions to make sure all students' ideas will be included and accepted?
- ✓ What type of questions will I ask to initiate higher level thinking?
- ✓ Am I promoting cooperation or competition in this activity?
- ✓ Are some materials acceptable or unacceptable based on gender?
- ✓ How will I address sexist comments/attitudes?

Creating Equitable Opportunities

Cooperative Learning

Role Playing

Synectics

Inquiry

Memorization

Biological Science Inquiry

Simulations

Teachers should help students learn about communication processes before mixed group work is initiated. By being sensitive to and exploring the power relationships that often occur in the classroom along gender, race, and culture lines, a more receptive and productive atmosphere can be nurtured. Students learn to understand and accept, without value judgment, the educational merit of disagreement or controversy during discussion. An awareness and exploration of emotional gender issues and sex-role stereotypes breaks down barriers in the group and classroom learning experience (Novogrodsky and Wells, 1989).

A technique based on the First Nations "talking circle" can be helpful in encouraging everyone to speak in group discussions. An object is passed to each person in the group. Only the person holding the object may speak. The speaker may choose to 'pass' without speaking. No one is allowed to interrupt the speaker.

The purpose of talking circles is to create a safe environment for people to share their point of view with others. This process helps students gain a sense of trust in their classmates. They come to believe that what they say will be listened to and accepted without criticism. They also gain an empathetic appreciation for points of view other than their own.

An atmosphere of patient and non-judgemental listening usually helps the shy students to speak out and the louder ones to moderate their participation. Going around the circle in a systematic way, inviting each student to participate by simply mentioning each name in turn can be an effective way to even out participation. It is often better to hold talking circles in small groups.

Teacher Interaction

Direct Instruction
Mastery Learning
Inductive Thinking Mode
Concept Attainment
Advance Organizers
Synectics
Inquiry
Memorization
Biological Science Inquiry

Teacher questioning techniques are the heart of many learning strategies. We can improve our effectiveness by ensuring that students are given equal opportunities to respond. We can improve our instruction by asking more higher order and precise academic questions of both boys and girls. Students who interrupt or call out answers, thwarting thinking and opportunity for response by other students, may need to be made aware of their interruptive tendencies. Peer or teacher data gathering may be an option to try.

Research shows questions that are general in nature and usually asked by girls, are often ignored. To address this, students need to be taught how to ask more specific questions and be shown problem-solving techniques related to their specific subject area. They will soon begin to get the answers they need to extend their learning.

Teacher Expectations

Non-Directive Teaching
Behaviour Modification
Programmed Instruction
Simulations

Teachers' expectations of student achievement are sometimes self-fulfilling prophecies. Questions and comments reflect the level of expectations teachers have for their students. Certain unintentional stereotypes may affect expectations of some students. Some of these might be: student attitude, appearance, parental interactions with the teacher, gender, culture and socioeconomic status.

Manipulation of Material

Inquiry Training

Biological Science Inquiry

Girls are not always given opportunities in early childhood to explore mathematical concepts with building and mechanical toys. As they grow older, opportunities for these types of experiences tend to diminish. As research suggests, there is a tendency for teachers to do the manipulative activities for girls. The reasons vary from getting on with the lesson to not wanting the girls to be frustrated. But we must provide for and allow all students to overcome a fear of failure so they experience success in these types of activity. All students need to be aware of the importance of learning to manipulate materials. Both teacher and students can accept the challenge to encourage the more reticent students to handle and explore manipulatives.

Teacher Evaluation Responses

Programmed Instruction

Direct Instruction

Empower all students by commenting on their work, using descriptive phrases which reflect their ability and inner learning strength. Be aware of the tendency to segregate on the basis of gender when commenting on neatness or handwriting for girls alone. It is equally beneficial that both genders have neat work.

"You've got such neat writing in this paragraph about the cave, Sarah."
(Girl ⟶ neatness)

"Let's see your work Christopher. Interesting! Why do you think your character wanted to go into that cave?"
(Boy ⟶ encouraged to extend thinking)

— Grade 6 Teacher

What messages do comments such as these send to the girl? to the boy?

How could the teacher rephrase these comments to avoid gender bias?

The Classroom – Physical Environment

In any kind of interaction we can notice two messages - what is said and what is not said. Sometimes what is NOT being said can send a louder message to the receiver of the message.

The same is true for visual displays in a school or classroom.

For each display, ask yourself:

1. **What am I saying?**

- What is the gender of the characters?
- What are the characters doing?
- What am I saying to the students by putting up this image?

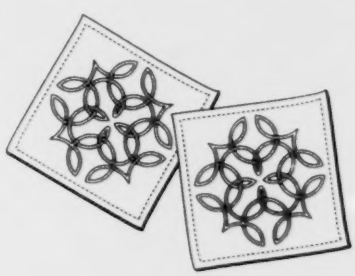
What you DON'T say can be just as strong a message as what you DO say.

2. **What am I not saying?**

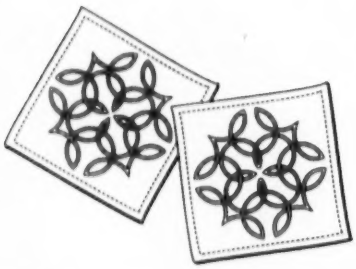
- Is this image educationally valuable for ALL students?
- Are students seeing a variety of role models for each gender?
  - Boys or men being gentle and caring?
  - Women or girls being independent and active?

Should an item be displayed?

If you can't put up materials that send a positive message to both genders of students, should you put it up at all?



School Ethos



What happens in the classroom is only part of the "big picture" of schooling. School ethos is the tone set for the students and staff. It can send powerful messages.

Remember that old saying "actions speak louder than words"?

To see if your school environment is gender equitable here are some things to look for. The following list has been adapted from *Sex Equity Snapshot* from the Federation of Women Teachers Association of Ontario (1988) and Carrelli's Checklist of equitable teaching practices found in *Sex Equity in Education: Readings and Strategies* (1988).

School Ethos Checklist ✔

A school is working towards gender equity when:

Instructionally

- ❑ The staff is aware of gender bias in teaching practices and makes appropriate changes when necessary.
- ❑ Conscious effort is made to ensure that girls and boys have equal amounts of computer time during and after classes.
- ❑ Staff is aware of gender bias in resource materials and teach students to identify it as well.
- ❑ Teachers compensate for gender bias in resource material and realize this is a deciding factor in decision making for materials purchased. (The Department of Education document *Selecting Fair and Equitable Learning Materials*, March, 1991 is an excellent resource)

- ❑ Resource materials, old and new, are checked for gender bias.
- ❑ Positive discussions of gender equity are encouraged in classrooms.

Professional Development

- ❑ Staff members feel safe in expressing gender equity issues.
- ❑ Gender equity inservice is available for professional development.
- ❑ Staff members know and understand the importance of legislation such as the Constitution, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*, *The Education Act*, and the teachers' *Code of Ethics* regarding schooling and gender equity.
- ❑ Gender equity support materials are reviewed and purchased for the professional library collection and gender equity is applied in the planning of professional development.
- ❑ Women and men are involved in in-school leadership activities.
- ❑ Staff members do not label or make negative assumptions about students on the basis of their families.
- ❑ Students observe that women and men use and maintain computers and audiovisual equipment.
- ❑ Both gender groups are a part of the social and functional makeup of the staff and, therefore, contribute to preparation, planning and clean up of the daily and periodic staff functions.

Administration and Management

- ❑ School communications - both written and verbal announcements use inclusive language.
- ❑ Unbiased discipline policy and actions are discussed and agreed upon.
- ❑ Requests are made for home-room parents/helpers not just "home-room moms".
- ❑ Gender isn't specified when requesting volunteers from the community.
- ❑ Parental issues are dealt with using the same respect, regardless of whether the mother or father initiates the concern.
- ❑ School practices which segregate and put students in stereotypical programs are eliminated.
- ❑ A sexual harassment policy is in place for students and staff.

Physical

- ❑ Mixed gender line-ups are used.
- ❑ Nongender segregated playground areas are evident.
- ❑ Opening exercises and announcements are led by both men and women.
- ❑ Student helpers are chosen from both genders in all activities:
    - safety patrol
    - library helpers
    - referees
    - attendance monitors
    - setting up crews
    - moving and lifting equipment or supplies
- ❑ A Gender Equity Committee comprised of students and staff is formed and maintained.

Lifestyles and Role Modelling

- ❑ A variety of careers, including non-traditional career options, are explored by both boys and girls.
- ❑ Facts and realities about career options are explored.
- ❑ Guest speakers from non-traditional roles are chosen as role models.

Extra-Curricular Activities

- ❑ Male and female teachers contribute to extra curricular activities.
- ❑ A wide range of extra curricular activities are offered that meet both the competitive and the non-competitive needs of students.

Are There Others You Can Add?

- ❑
- ❑
- ❑

Easing Elementary to High School Transition

The transition from elementary school to high school occurs at a most critical and fragile time in the development of our students. In those communities where students must relocate to another building, it can be scary moving to a high school, further away from the safe haven of elementary school. We need to explore options which minimize the fear of the unknown in this time of uncertainty for both students and parents.

- What type of transition program is in place in your school and high schools?
- How are the groups set up for new students to provide support and familiar faces to touch base with for the first year?
- Are staff exchanges in teaching assignments possible to ease the transfer of students from elementary to high school settings so students may see a familiar teacher?
- What type of opportunities are provided for new and "seasoned" high school students to share information on coping with the transition period?

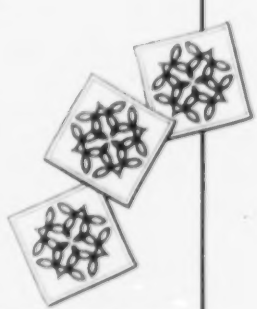
Reflection

Ask your older students to comment on the following:

"As boys and girls progress through school, their opinions of boys have grown increasingly more positive and their opinions of girls increasingly more negative."

Then tell them it was written in 1973. (Frazier and Sadker, p.71)

What are their reactions?



Self-Esteem and Adolescents

Research indicates that as students move into higher grades, gender is perceived to have status, and the males are perceived to be the "right" sex.

What can we do to help students feel confident and good about themselves so that they can "march to their own drum" while learning to appreciate and get along with others?

During adolescence, hormones create many physical and emotional changes. At this time in their lives, young people are particularly sensitive to the world around them. They see perfect figures in magazines, movies and the media, that in hundreds of ways tell them they should be something else.

The increasing pressure to fit in affects the lives of adolescents in many ways at school and can have an effect on their futures. Decisions made in high school begin to affect their futures - selection of classes affect career options or entrance into post-secondary institutions and resulting career options. Unsafe sex (often engaged in so the person feels accepted) can result in pregnancy or disease and curbs education and career choice. Eating disorders or drug and alcohol abuse because of low self-esteem affect achievement and, if left unchecked, can produce deadly results.

Self-Esteem for Girls

As girls go through school, their self-esteem plummets while that of the boys keeps climbing. Based on some of the research mentioned, one can see how this downward trend in girls begins in elementary school and continues through to high school. This loss, perhaps, is one of the most devastating effects on students.

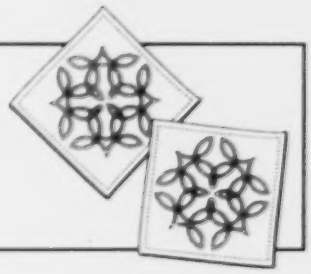
Girls want to be accepted by the boys and often pretend they have less intelligence so they won't hurt boys' feelings and risk being ignored. They can also become obsessed with their looks in an effort to acknowledge or to compensate for poor self-esteem.

In addition to modifying teaching practices and establishing an equitable school ethos, some schools have implemented study groups for girls. In single-sexed groupings, girls felt much freer to discuss concerns, study, and question without the added pressure of being in a mixed group (Masucci, 1995).

Developing a positive support system for both boys and girls to accommodate their personal and academic world could help them build confidence.

Reflection

How can I encourage positive self-esteem for girls at these critical adolescent years?

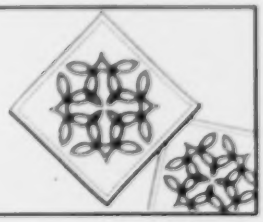


Boys Also Suffer Loss of Self-Esteem

Boys need to be aware of the impact of gender inequity in schools and in society. They need help to realize that present sexism is not their fault; boys, like girls, can be part of the solutions. They may also feel they are victims of societal expectations to be "macho" and "powerful". Boys also can benefit from opportunities to sort out and express their feelings. They also need positive role models that exhibit a wide range of abilities, emotions and characteristics.

Reflection

Like girls during adolescence, boys too are under pressure to "fit in" with their peers. What examples have you observed?



As our society has a history of being male dominated, students will need to understand current issues and the history behind them. Our young people can and will be change agents in society. Empowerment, acceptance and understanding for both genders will make the future of these students much brighter.

One school division began a series of retreats for both boys and girls in Grade 11 and 12 (Novogrodsky, Kaufman, Holland and Wells, 1992). During the workshops, issues most relevant to students at this age were discussed. The groups were divided by gender for the first few days, when students explored some of the pressures each feels growing up as a young man or a young woman. Living with sexism and a patriarchal society were the main thrust of the day's topics. For the young men, the group leaders needed to maintain a "balance between helping them understand how they are a part of a system of oppression and how they too are victims of that system" (p.76). There was the risk that these messages would make the boys feel disempowered and resentful, "so activities were designed to show how men can make a difference; how men can individually and in groups begin to dissemble the sexist behaviors and structures in their own lives and work against sexism" (p.76).

Career Choices

Studies tell us that girls do not tend to embrace maths and sciences with the same enthusiasm as do boys. Some people ask why this is a cause for concern.

- Careers that use maths and sciences are usually the higher paying jobs.
- Both boys and girls can both do well at these and other subjects.

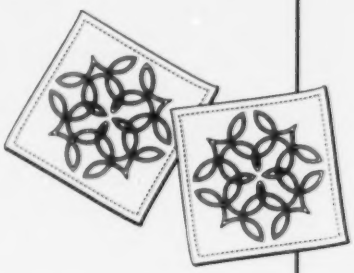
All students need to be encouraged to be successful in these courses.

Reflection

We can't forget that males are also under-represented in certain careers such as child care, nursing, primary teaching, clerical and service industries. Should we not encourage them to consider these as professions with the same conviction as we want to encourage girls to take maths and sciences?

What do you think?

Are there subjects that boys do not embrace with the same vigor as do girls? Which ones? Is this an issue at your school?



Dealing with Sexual Harassment

One of the underlying premises of harassment is the abuse of power. Harassment is any comment or action which is intimidating, annoying, hurtful or malicious. The victim is always in a position of powerlessness. In a sense the person has no choice but to be the victim. The perpetrator has or attempts to "hold something over" the victim. It may be peer acceptance, pride, or marks. Schools are places of learning where students must be free of unwanted comments and physical invasions of person and space. All students have the right to feel safe in school.

Many incidents of harassment occur daily in schools but go unreported because of:

- fear of reporting a popular person or teacher
- fear of reprisal and ostracism
- fear of increased harassment

Incidents of sexual harassment should not be trivialized. All students, whether directly involved or witnesses, learn

lasting lessons. Sexual harassment by teachers and other students is denigrating for both girls and boys. Harassment of any nature should not be tolerated.

"While teachers and administrators look the other way, sexually denigrating comments, pinching, touching and propositioning happen daily. Sensitive and insecure about their appearance, some girls are so intimidated they suffer in silence. Others fight back only to find this heightens the harassment." (Sadker and Sadker, 1994, p.9)

Does this quote support your experience?

Ask a colleague if they know of anyone who was sexually harassed verbally, suggestively, or physically while in school. What happened?

Reflection

Have you ever heard these types of comments when boys tease girls?

"Boys will be boys."

"He's bothering you because he likes you."

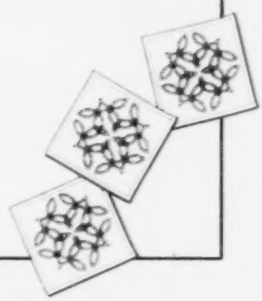
Does this suggest girls' safety is not as important as that of boys?

If students like each other, they will need to be taught socially acceptable ways of showing their feelings. If a student has enough courage to report an incident, it should be dealt with promptly.

Can you relate an incident of teasing/harassing based on gender?

How was it handled?

Were there any comments or actions that told of underlying stereotypes or assumptions?



Sexual harassment violates fundamental democratic principles, and we ought to discuss the problem in a way that highlights those principles.
(Stein, 1996)

Harassment of boys also occurs. It may not be as frequent and insidious as for girls, but it is serious. Research suggest that some of the most traumatic events occur when boys are new to a school or sports groups. The rituals of "hazing" during initiation rites send complex messages to boys. Often these activities are sexually degrading. This form of sexual harassment, accepted and condoned by many as a part of the culture of teen boys, is wrong. It sets a double standard: boys harassing girls is wrong, but when boys are harassed it is excused as a rite of passage.

Devising a Sexual Harassment Policy

Above all, schools must consider sexual harassment as a matter of social injustice.
(Stein, 1994)

The fundamental principle of respect needs to be at the centre of any harassment policy. All members of the school community need to understand the standards required to support this principle.

A sexual harassment policy must include all school personnel – professional and support staff, and students. The school community must also be made aware that a policy is in place.

A comprehensive policy could include the following elements:

- Harassment in any form will not be tolerated at school.
- All members of the school community need to know what harassment is and is not.
- A concerted joint effort among staff, students, and other community partners in preparing and enforcing a harassment policy will be required to eliminate degrading activity.
- The victim is supported when reporting the incident.
- Compassion and counselling for both victim and offender must be part of the resolution of each incident.
- Simply offering punishment for an offender does not address the larger picture. Offenders need to realize the underlying issues of power, unreasonable expectations and respect which will lay the foundation and go further than suspension or expulsion.
- In-service, joint meetings and policy formation are part of the efforts needed to raise the awareness of staff, students and the parents.

You may find samples of harassment policies through your local teacher organization, school division, or department of education.

Hey, get a load of that chick on that new weight lifting poster in the gym.

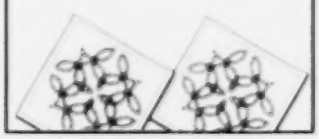
- Grade 10 Boy

I don't like what the boys say about that poster in the gym. Yah right, like I can change it. Who'll listen and who'll do anything, I'll just be the "complainer" who can't take a joke.

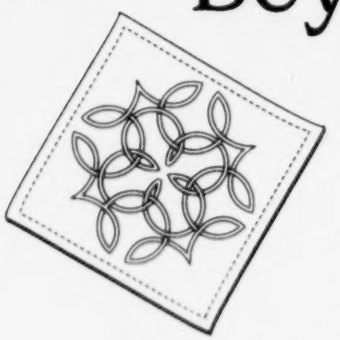
- Grade 10 Girl

Girls will not feel helpless in these situations if a comprehensive harassment policy is in place. It will provide a vehicle for dealing with their concerns.

A school division that supports gender equity will have staff members sensitive to issues such as these.



Beyond the School



Inclusion of Parents

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Like all of us, parents have varying levels of sensitivity to gender issues. By working together we can support gender equity. Perhaps short notes in the school or classroom newsletter will initiate dialogue. Some topics or programs to consider might be:

Toys

- Discourage the notion of "boy" toys and "girl" toys. Sometimes simply saying "We have children toys, not boy or girl toys around here" is enough to help set a gender equitable tone.
- Encourage play with a wide variety of toys. A kitchen center and tool center is fine for all children to play with. Creating and building things are valuable experiences that promote development in spatial awareness and fine-motor skills for both genders.

Television Programs/Movies

- Watch TV with your children.
  - How are the women or girls portrayed?
  - Are they strong and independent, able to think for themselves?
  - How do the characters deal with difficult situations?
  - How do the main characters relate to their helpers in the program?
- When we take our children to a movie, the messages are very strong, especially when one considers the lasting memories all the spin off merchandising encourage. Some of the most popular animated

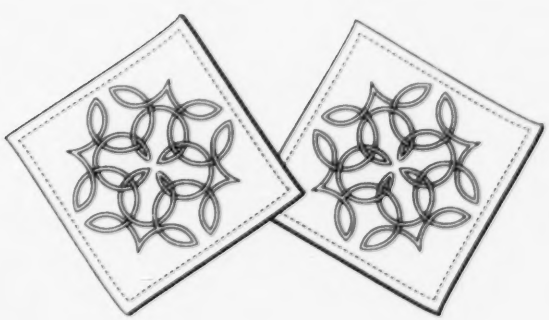
movies are sexist and violent. We can convey our standards by discussing gender issues and stereotypes present in films we choose to view.

Books

- Expose your children to a wide variety of books. If something appears in a book that is biased, discuss it or provide other examples.
- Ask librarians and teachers for books that have positive and/or non-traditional gender role models for your children.

Community

- Initiate and encourage projects for girls and boys that go beyond traditional roles.
- Create safe recreational gathering places that promote creativity, where youth can meet without fear of violence.
- Ask teachers and administrators how they are implementing gender equity and what they need to help. Work towards supporting and meeting these requests.
- Encourage girls to enter the political process.



GENDER Discrimination

Long-held attitudes and traditions are often at the root of these discriminatory practices making them difficult to recognize. Discrimination based on sex is illegal under the *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* and *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, **even if you didn't mean to do it.**

Some examples of widespread discrimination within a school division are:

Classroom Instruction	Boys get more and better instruction from teachers than girls.
Support Staff	Some non-teaching female support staff get paid less than their male counterparts. Does this happen in your school division?
Employment	Women are by far the majority of teachers, yet very few of them, or their interests, are represented in policy making or administration in schools and school divisions. In Saskatchewan, for example, 62% of classroom teachers are women, while only 11% of directors are women.
Testing/Learning Assistance	Boys are given more testing and remediation in reading while for girls, math remediation is infrequent. Have the testing instruments been examined for gender and other biases?

The legislation in each of the *Codes* also stipulates that the onus of proof is not on the person who complained about discrimination; it is on the party which did the discriminating. This party would have to prove to the courts why their actions of gender discrimination, such as giving girls a lesser education or paying female secretaries less than male custodians, are justified.

Eliminating Gender Discrimination in School Divisions

Of course there are the challenges of funding for adequate staff development, time, ongoing support structures and maintenance, and the courts recognize this. (Dickson and MacKay, 1989)

Concerted efforts and long-term commitment of a school division will lead to benefits both financially and in student success which will far outweigh the costs . The two key components for becoming a gender equitable school division are:

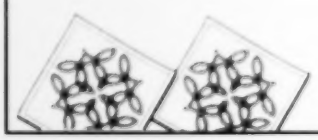
- assessing and eliminating systemic discriminatory practices
- establishing gender equitable strategies.

Some examples of proactive strategies are listed in the following chart.

ASSESSING AND ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES

Does your school division:

- ❑ actively seek and provide inservice on gender equity?
- ❑ provide staff with inservice on gender and instruction?
- ❑ assess each school's physical environment for gender equity?
- ❑ have an employment equity policy?
- ❑ initiate and fund equally extra curricular activities, especially gender differentiated groups which provide opportunities for varied interests?
- ❑ identify sexist materials in your resource centers?
- ❑ have statistics on gender and employment level positions of staff?



CREATING A GENDER EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENT

Does your school division:

- ❑ have a long-term plan to include gender equity topics in your inservices?
- ❑ use this document and other equity documents as a basis to begin eliminating biases in instruction?
- ❑ use inclusive language in internal and external communication?
- ❑ ensure staff are aware of your teacher organization's sexual harassment policy?
- ❑ have a student sexual harassment policy?
- ❑ continue purchasing resource materials, posters and books that have positive role models for both genders?
- ❑ create a demand with publishers for these gender equitable materials?
- ❑ have a data bank of teacher resource materials that promote gender equity?
- ❑ encourage a pay equity analysis for support staff?
- ❑ promote leadership activities for women in education so students have female as well as male role models as decision makers in the schools?

Legal Considerations & Gender Equity

Everyone has a right to an education without discrimination because of race, creed, religion, color, sex, marital status, disability, nationality, ancestry, or place of origin.

- Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, Section 13 (1)

Gender inequity has several consequences: poor teaching, poor learning, and legal consequences.

Reflection

When confronted by people who want to devalue gender equity, what should I do?

Listen to them and find out what they are really saying.

Are they afraid for themselves?

Are they insecure?

Gender equity is about enriching classrooms, widening opportunities, and expanding choices for all students. (Bailey, 1996)

The practices and actions of an organization reveal its beliefs. When we see chronic gender inequitable practices, we know that an organization has not embraced gender equity. When a philosophy or an attitude, like gender equity, makes its way throughout an entire institution such as education, we can say it is systemic.

Systemic gender discrimination results when practices or attitudes, whether by design or intent, have a limiting effect on a individual's potential simply because of a person's gender. (Abella, 1984)

Conclusion

Conclusion

The effect of gender issues on instruction and learning is a relatively new consideration for many teachers. The gender of a student does not affect intellectual ability. Rather, the environment and socialization factors play a role in the learning and in the ultimate success or failure of students to realize their potentials.

As teachers, we are obligated to facilitate the full development of all our students, regardless of gender. We must be aware of how gender can affect the learning environment. It is imperative in our work to build upon, not negate or ignore, the role of gender. The result will be enhancement and enrichment of the lives of all those we teach.

For those of us who are parents as well as teachers, the information we are receiving about gender equity may give us an uneasy feeling. It appears that the very system we work within has played a part in offering less to our own children. We know that other parents may feel the same. Yet we must remember that the educational system, like society at large, is undergoing change that requires complex solutions.

With the volume of research in the area of gender equity, people will have to be accountable for this issue in their schools. Accountability demands that we may have to focus on changing our ways of interacting with boys and girls. It may also mean some teachers will have to evaluate and modify some of their practices. We will have to continue to be more reflective in our teaching, and, in so doing, improve our effectiveness.

This document is a starting point for action, personally and professionally.

You can make a difference. Start today.

A preschool brother and sister were talking while playing in the sandbox:

"Know what?"

"What?"

"I can be anything I want when I grow up!"

"Me too!" says the brother, "but we gotta go to school first."

"Yup, it's gonna be fun," says the little girl.

"Hey, we can go to school together," he suggests.

"Okay, but not until after we're done building this sand castle."

Resource Materials

Resources

A Guide to Non-Sexist Children's Books, Vol. 3 (1995). Edited by Denise Wilms and Ilene Cooper. Gives synopses, appropriate ages; indexed by author, subject and title.

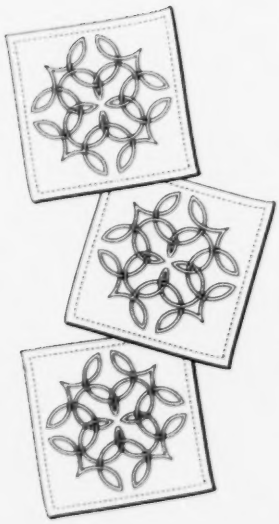
Anti-Bias Curriculum - Tools for Empowering Young Children (1989). Louise Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force, Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Count Me In: Gender Equity in the Primary Classroom (1994). Judy Kwasnica Mullen. An excellent source of practical strategies. Includes exhaustive annotated bibliography of teacher rescue materials and student materials.

Creating Choices: A Workshop on Gender Equity. Saskatoon Teachers' Association, Saskatoon East Teachers' Association. Lesson plans, statistics. Puts women's issues in context.

Expanding Choices: Math & Science Programs for Girls and Women (1992). Armour & Associates, Halifax, NS. (Available from Saskatchewan Women's Secretariat and Saskatchewan Education.) Lists programs, conferences, and their addresses from across Canada that involve girls in maths and sciences.

Gender Equity Education: Teacher Resource Guide (1994). British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), BCTF Lesson Aids Department. An excellent resource guide of philosophy, research and bibliography. Includes 41 lesson plans (K-12).



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Guide to Nonsexist Teaching Activities (K-12) (1983). Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory Centre for Sex Equity, Phoenix, AZ: The Oryx Press.

Ontario Women's Directorate Equity Kit (1994). Toronto, ON: Ontario Women's Directorate. Workshop materials for parents and educators - primary grades in English and French.

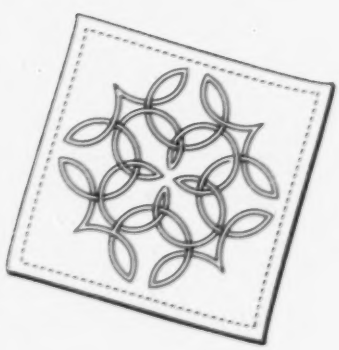
Teaching Children to Think Critically about Sexism and Other Forms of Bias (1993). Paula J. Caplan, Margaret Secord-Gilbert & Pat Staton. Toronto, ON: Green Dragon Press.

The Equity Principal: An Inclusive Approach to Excellence - Administrator Handbook (1988). Dolores A. Grayson. GrayMill Foundation Rt. 1 - Box 45, Earlham, IA 50072. A workbook for administrators for gender-equity sensitization through administration.

The Girls are the Ones with the Pointy Nails: An Exploration of Children's Conceptions of Gender (1993). Karen Bailey. London, ON: Althouse Press.

Thumbs Down: A Classroom Response to Violence Towards Women (1990). Canadian Teachers' Federation. Lesson plans (K-12). Fact Sheets on dating violence and wife abuse. 110 Argyle Avenue, Ottawa, ON K2P 1B4.

Tools for Gender Equity (1995). British Columbia Teachers' Federation Report. Collection of articles by teachers on various gender-related topics in teaching. A bibliography of lesson plans and other teacher resources is included.



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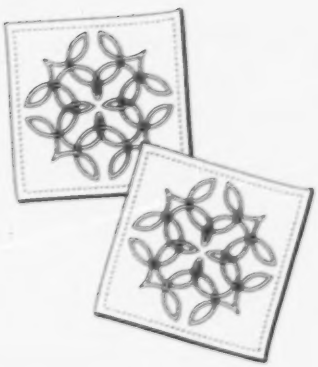

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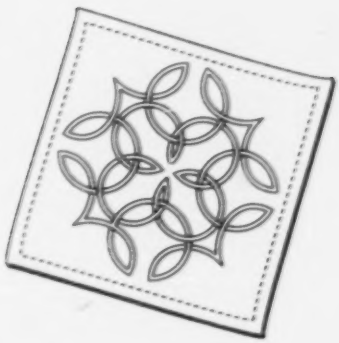
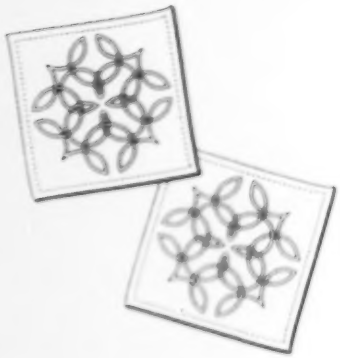


APPENDIX A

APPLICATION - Observation Guide and Worksheet



This type of observation is very intensive and gives a quick snapshot of teacher responses. It does get easier the more often you practice.

If you would like to get a sense of what's happening in your classroom, try using this approach. To collect data you might record or video-tape yourself or have a partner observe you. A 15 - 20 minute interval is a manageable time frame for gathering data.

1. Draw a seating plan, the larger the better (81/2" x 17"). Include students' names and gender (color coding would be a good idea).

2. During the observation period, listen and record the code of various types of response types beside the student's name (see chart on next page for codes).

3. After the observation time is up, tally each response type according to gender. Use the chart to organize and analyze your findings.

Helpful Hints:

Observe and record only what the teacher says to the students, *not* what type of comments the students make.

Quantity and Quality of Teacher Response Worksheet

To use with your seating plan. (Enlarge this to make data gathering easier.)

Before or after observation identify:

- ***gender of students***

During observation:

- ***record teacher interactions with each student beside their names***

(See coding chart below.)

Keep this sheet when it has been completed. You will be able to use it again later for further analysis relating to achievement.

ANALYZING YOUR RESULTS

How many interactions did you have in the observation time? (Count all code markings.)

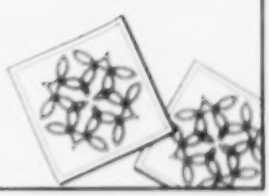
TOTAL _____.

Divide that by the number of minutes and you get _____ interactions per minute.

FREQUENCY OF TEACHER RESPONSE BY GENDER

Code	Response Type	Example	Response Tally	
			Girls	Boys
P	Praise	"Excellent", "Good work"		
A	Acceptance	"Okay", "Uh huh"		
R	Remediation	"Let's think again on that"		
C	Criticism	"No, you're not right"		
N	None			
	TOTAL			

Examine each category to find emerging patterns.



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Self-Assessment of Quality of Interaction and Achievement Levels Worksheet

SEATING PLAN

Before or after observation, identify:
- *gender (B/G)*
- *achievement level (A/H/L)*

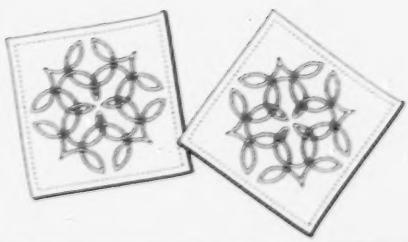
During observation, record:
- *interaction type*

(See coding below.)

FREQUENCY OF TEACHER RESPONSE BY GENDER

	GENDER					
	Girls			Boys		
Interaction Type	**High**	**Avg**	**Low**	**High**	**Avg**	**Low**
Praise (P)						
Acceptance (A)						
Remediation (R)						
Criticism (C)						
None						
TOTAL						

What patterns appear?
Are patterns what you expected?
Are changes required in your interactions?



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